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WHAT CAN NORTH AMERICA DO TO PROMOTE SPECIFICALLY RURAL ACTIVITIES ON THE FIELD?

13. FOR THE PHILIPPINE ISLANDS

by
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North America can help the work in the Philippine Islands through the National Christian Council by securing funds for a Rural Secretary of that Council and by giving advice about the type of person to be secured. Four or five years ago the Rural Committee drew up a plan asking for the full time service of a man acquainted with the rural needs of the Islands. We based our program on principles discussed and opportunities seen when Dr. K. L. Butterfield visited the Philippines. Probably the Rural Secretary would be a national.

Board secretaries could suggest to mission administrators and others that they release a missionary now and then for particular pieces of rural work in the archipelago.

Board secretaries could remind those engaged in rural work, such as pastors in rural areas, of the well-planned program of the National Christian Council which was worked out with Dr. Butterfield in 1930-1931. That program is given in detail and is available for anyone who wishes to study it, in the volume THE RURAL MISSION OF THE CHURCH IN EASTERN ASIA. The word of a board secretary bears a good deal of weight in the Philippines. If the secretaries would inquire about the rural program, and ask their missionaries if they are cooperating with the Rural Work Committee of the National Christian Council, that would be of real help.

North American authorities could urge missionaries to give primary consideration to the task of rural reconstruction units and demonstration centers. While commendable work has been done in certain aspects of rural reconstruction and some fine demonstrations have been made in one or more phases of rural life, no field missionary has yet undertaken either a well-rounded demonstration in a limited area or a complete rural reconstruction unit. Perhaps if board secretaries would emphasize this, the missionaries would turn aside temporarily from other work to get it under way. We might well give primary emphasis for the next five years to a few demonstrations. They should be undertaken cooperatively.

We ought to pool our resources in personnel and finance for the purpose of finding a Christian solution to the landlord-tenant problem in a typical rural area. After conferring with missionaries, government officials, farmers, landlords, and others, Kagawa said that the landlord-tenant relations in the Philippines were the worst in the Orient, worse than those in either Japan or India. Yet there has been no concerted effort nor intensive study of a given community to see whether or not Christian principles could be applied to the problem in such a way as to effect a solution.

I would suggest that Silliman University, Central Philippine College, Union Christian College of Manila, and especially Union Theological Seminary of the Philippines, change their courses and methods so as to give a rural setting and interpretation to many of the subjects now offered, and to include other subjects not now given. Our seminary is an example of those unfortunate institutions that are compelled by circumstances to pick men out of rural areas, urbanize them, and then send them back to do rural work. But even there we should be able to teach such subjects as sociology, "ruralology," practical and systematic theology, and church history in a rural setting. Why can't a man who is responsible for a course in homiletics take his students into villages and have them preach, if possible in the dialect, but if that is not possible, in English. While one student is preaching, the others may take notes for later classroom use. The next morning the students might visit some of the families in the community. They could talk to the people about their illnesses and medical care, and ask about economic conditions, rice crops, land depreciation, literacy, religious services, and the like. By the time students had spent a day or two in this manner, they would be thinking: "It's some job to be a village church pastor." If this method can be used in a subject as theoretical as the art of preaching, why not in other subjects?

North America can encourage budget-making groups to include an annual item of from $50 to $75 to pay the travel expenses of five to ten persons who wish to attend the National Rural Life Institute held at the College of Agriculture, University of the Philippines. This Institute provides a week's course and gives a vision of what is in store for rural people. More pastors and lay persons would attend it if they could afford the cost of travel. The National Christian Council bears a large percentage of the other expenses of the Institute.

Provision should be made for more rural extension work emanating from hospitals, such as that done during the last year by the Milwaukee hospital at Legaspi, Albay. At first their extension staff consisted of a doctor, two nurses, and a Bible woman. Now they have a doctor, a nurse, a Bible woman, and an evangelist. They go into a village and stay for two weeks, teaching public health and the Bible, treating the sick and preaching every evening. The usual charge is twelve and a half cents for each examination and treatment. The evangelistic results alone, to say nothing of public health education and the cure of diseases, have been wonderful.

Board secretaries should question persons responsible for recruiting for the ministry regarding the possibility of securing a larger percentage of candidates from rural high schools, and, further, of sending a few well chosen recruits to rural high schools instead of to academic institutions.

Another suggestion applies to recruiting candidates for rural service both here and abroad. Consider the matter from the standpoint of young people in America who live in the middle western states and have opportunity to attend denominational colleges located in rural areas. They hesitate to go to those schools because they think they offer nothing distinctive in the field of education. But if these schools were to set up extension departments to serve their immediate communities in the humanities in much the same way as colleges of agriculture have offered help in their specialized fields, they might at once get a new lease on life. Let them take to the rural man the blessings of art, music, and drama; of planned play and recreation; of education for public health and sanitation and the like through faculty and student bodies, and they will inspire a new confidence in their own function, offer a far better type of education, serve the communities about them and give their graduates a philosophy, a theology, and a

technique for rural service. We could look to young people coming out of such colleges for some first class rural missionaries.

The boards should make available for their candidates, returned missionaries, and missionary administrators details of the Mexican government's program in what they call their educational missions. Dr. Charles T. Loram of Yale said that nothing in the field of education presented at the Honolulu educational conference a year ago last summer compared in value for rural peoples with the experiment in Mexico.

Everyone interested in developing self-supporting indigenous churches should study the community parish for its lessons for the Philippines. There is far too great a multiplication of small, weak churches. The tendency is to organize a church wherever a few people are gathered together. The remedy, I believe, is the community parish church located in the natural meeting place of the whole community.

We need also to keep emphasizing the idea of a "community serving church." Some churches are "filling stations," others are "service stations."